

Heart2Heart Hugs Warm Clothing Drive

Dover- Principal Shan Green of Central Middle School proudly presented opening remarks at the kickoff of the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) Heart 2 Heart Hugs warm clothing drive. The annual drive, in its 9th year, collects new warm items for the children in Delaware who are homeless, under housed, or in foster care. This years campaign is an initiative to collect a broader range of warm items. New items such as sleeping bags, coats, hats, sweatshirts and gloves that will bring warmth to a child in need.

"As the weather gets colder and the holiday's approach, it is important we remember to help Delawareans most in need." Said Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long. "I'm proud to support he Heart 2 Heart Hugs campaign and its efforts to provide needed items to thousands of homeless and foster care children across the state."

"Heart 2 Heart Hugs is a statewide drive that begins in November- with various organizations and companies throughout the state offering their time and resources to collect and deliver items to Delaware's Nearly 5,000 children who are homeless, in foster care or under housed. Representative Harvey Kenton shared, "It was an honor and privilege to attend the Heart 2 Heart Hugs kickoff event today. Everyone deserves to have warm clothing and a hug. I encourage everyone to get involved..."

"Additionally, out of the nearly 5,000 children in Delaware who are homeless or in foster care, approximately one-third are children with disabilities," explained Wendy Strauss, Director of GACEC which serves as the state advisory panel for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its

amendments. "We connect hearts and collect hugs for children who are underprivileged."

Dover Mayor Robin Christiansen, who has been involved with the drive for many years, shared "Heart 2 Heart Hugs is a program that for 9 years has warmed not only the children in need but also the hearts of those who embrace this cause. It helps each of us, young and old, to live the Golden Rule. I heartily encourage everyone to become a part of something bigger... by helping others."

The warm clothing drive will collect new items through February 10, 2018. Drop off points are located throughout the state and can be found on the GACEC website at www.gacec.delaware.gov. Interested parties may also contact GACEC offices (302) 739-4553 for additional information about drop offs or about becoming a partner.